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22. The food according to claim 21 wherein the food is selected from the group consisting of milk, yogurt, curd, cheese, fermented milks, milk based fermented products, ice-creams, fermented cereal based products, milk based powders, infant formulae, tablets, liquid bacterial suspensions, dried oral supplement, liquid oral supplement, dry tube feeding and liquid tube feeding.

# REMARKS

This Preliminary Amendment is submitted in the above-identified patent application. Pursuant to the Preliminary Amendment Claims 3-12 have been amended and newly submitted Claims 20-22 have been added. This Preliminary Amendment does not add new matter. Further, Applicants note that the Preliminary Amendment is not being made to narrow the claims and/or for purposes of patentability but, merely to comport the claims to U.S. practice and/or to add additional claims. Applicants therefore do not intend to disclaim any subject matter in view of the amendments.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "**Versions with Markings to Show Changes Made.**"

Respectfully submitted,

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**VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE****In the Claims:**

Claims 3-4 and 7-13 have been amended as follows:

3. (Once Amended) The Lactobacillus strain according to [any of the preceding claims] claim 1, which is capable [to grow] of growing in the presence of up to 0.4 % bile salts.

4. (Once Amended) The Lactobacillus strain according to [any of the preceding claims] claim 1, which is selected from the group consisting of Lactobacillus rhamnosus [or] and Lactobacillus paracasei.

7. (Once Amended) A method for preparing [Use of a Lactobacillus strain according to any of the preceding claims for the preparation of] an ingestible support material comprising using a lactic acid bacterium strain belonging to the genus Lactobacillus having the capability of preventing colonization of the intestine with pathogenic bacteria causing diarrhoea.

8. (Once Amended) The method [use] according to claim 7, wherein the Lactobacillus strain is contained in the ingestible support material in an amount from about  $10^5$  cfu / g to about  $10^{12}$  cfu / g support material.

9. (Once Amended) A method for preparing an ingestible support comprising the steps of using [Use of] a supernatant of a culture of a lactic acid bacterium strain belonging to the genus Lactobacillus [strain according to any of the claims 1 to 6 for the preparation of an ingestible support] having the capability of preventing colonization of the intestine with pathogenic bacteria causing diarrhoea.

10. (Once Amended) The method of [use according to any of the claims 7 or] claim 9, wherein the ingestible support [material] is a food composition selected from the group consisting of milk, yogurt, curd, cheese, fermented milks, milk based fermented products, ice-creams, fermented cereal based products, milk based powders, and infant formulae.

11. (Once Amended) A method [The use according to any of the claims 7 to 10, wherein the support material is used] for the treatment [and/or prophylaxis] of a disorder [disorders] associated with diarrhoea comprising the step of administering a lactic acid bacterium strain belonging to the genus Lactobacillus having the capability of preventing colonization of the intestine with pathogenic bacteria causing diarrhoea.

12. (Once Amended) A [Food or] pharmaceutical composition containing at least one lactic acid bacterium strain belonging to the genus Lactobacillus having the capability of preventing colonization of the intestine with pathogenic bacteria causing diarrhoea [Lactobacillus strain according to any of the claims 1 to 6] or a supernatant of a culture thereof.

13. (Once Amended) The [composition] method according to claim [12,] 11 wherein the lactic acid bacterium strain is in a composition which is selected from the group consisting of milk, yogurt, curd, cheese, fermented milks, milk based fermented products, ice-creams, fermented cereal based products, milk based powders, infant formulae, tablets, liquid

bacterial suspensions, dried oral supplement, [wet] liquid oral supplement, dry tube feeding [or wet] and liquid tubefeeding.

Claims 14-22 have been added.

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